

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Original) A filter assembly comprising
a plastics housing providing an inlet port and an outlet port, the material of the housing being such that the assembly can be sterilized by subjecting the interior of the housing to steam under pressure while the exterior of the housing is at atmospheric pressure without damaging the housing,
a filter element held in the housing and comprising
a filter medium of water wettable material having a central passage extending between first and second ends of the filter medium,
the first end of the filter medium being embedded in a first end cap of a plastics material at a first joint to close said passage and the second end of the filter medium being embedded in a second end cap of a plastics material at a second joint, wherein the characteristics of the filter medium at the joints are not materially changed,
said second end cap providing a fluid connection between said passage and one of said ports,
the first and second end caps forming respective water-wettable joints with the filter medium.
2. (New) A filter assembly comprising:
a plastics housing having an interior, an exterior, an inlet port and an outlet port;
a filter element positioned in the interior of the housing and including a filter medium; and at least one valve provided with the housing and including an annular sleeve and a passage, the annular sleeve surrounding the passage and being movable in one sense to open the valve and provide a fluid flow path along the passage between the exterior and the interior of the housing and in the opposite sense to close the valve.
3. (New) The filter assembly of claim 2 wherein the valve includes a valve member, wherein movement of the sleeve causes the valve member to move between a first position in which the valve member permits flow along the fluid flow path through the passage and a second position in which the valve member prevents flow through the passage.
4. (New) The filter assembly of claim 2 wherein the valve includes a valve member, the valve member and the sleeve being arranged to move the valve member axially between a

first position in which the valve member permits flow along the fluid flow path through the passage and a second position in which the valve member prevents flow through the passage in response to rotational movement of the sleeve.

5. (New) The filter assembly of claim 2 wherein the valve includes a valve member which is axially moveable between a first position in which the valve member permits flow along the fluid flow path through the passage and a second position in which the valve member prevents flow through the passage and a mechanism arranged with the sleeve to move the valve member between the first and second positions in response to rotational movement of the sleeve.

6. (New) The filter assembly of claim 5 where in the mechanism includes a pin and a cooperating slot.

7. (New) The filter assembly of claim 6 wherein the slot extends helically within the sleeve.

8. (New) The filter assembly of claim 2 wherein the housing includes a vent port and the valve is arranged with the vent port.

9. (New) The filter assembly of claim 2 wherein the housing includes a drainage port and the valve is arranged with the drainage port.

10. (New) A filter assembly comprising:
a plastics housing having an interior, an exterior, an inlet port, and an outlet port;
a filter element positioned in the interior of the housing and including a filter medium;
a passage which extends between the interior and the exterior of the housing and includes a first portion and a second portion; and
a valve associated with the passage and including a valve member movable between a first position and a second position, wherein in the first position the valve member is in the first portion of the passage and the valve is open, permitting flow through the passage, and in the second position the valve member is sealed within the second portion of the passage and the valve is closed, preventing flow through the passage, and a rotatable sleeve arranged with the valve member to move the valve member between the first and second positions in response to rotation of the sleeve.

11. (New) The filter assembly of claim 10 wherein the valve member moves axially in response to rotational movement of the sleeve.

12. (New) The filter assembly of claim 10 further comprising a pin and a cooperating slot arranged to move the valve member axially in response to rotation of the sleeve.

13. (New) The filter assembly of claim 12 wherein the slot has a helical configuration and is positioned in the sleeve.

14. (New) The filter assembly of claim 12 wherein the pin is carried on the housing.

15. (New) The filter assembly of claim 10 wherein the sleeve moves axially in response to rotational movement of the sleeve.

16. (New) The filter assembly of claim 10 wherein valve further includes a flange, which connects the sleeve to the valve member.

17. (New) The filter assembly of claim 10 wherein the first portion of the passage includes a plurality of spaced ribs defining grooves between the spaced ribs.

18. (New) A filter assembly comprising:
a plastics housing having an interior, an exterior, an inlet port and an outlet port;
a filter element positioned in the interior of the housing and including a filter medium;
a passage which extends between the interior and the exterior of the housing and includes a first portion and a second portion, the first portion having a larger diameter than the second portion and including a plurality of spaced ribs defining grooves between the spaced ribs; and
a valve associated with the passage and including a valve member movable between the first position and a second position, wherein in the first position the valve member is in the first portion of the passage and the valve is open, permitting flow through the passage, and in the second position the valve member is sealed within the second portion of the passage and the valve is closed, preventing flow through the passage.

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19. (New) The filter assembly of claim 18 wherein the valve further includes a rotatable sleeve arranged to move the valve member between the first and second positions in response to rotation of the sleeve.

20. (New) The filter assembly of claim 19 wherein the sleeve is connected to the valve member and moves axially with the valve member.